

**TESTIMONY OF CAROL CHANDLER
BEFORE THE CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CPR) COMMISSION
PANEL ON CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP
Cal State Fresno, Friday, September 17, 2004**

I am Carol Chandler, a Partner in Chandler Farms and a member of the Western Growers Board of Directors. I am also Past State President of California Women for Agriculture, which is an all-volunteer grassroots advocacy group for our industry. I am a member of a 4th generation California family farm that grows peaches, plums, nectarines and nuts.

Today I am speaking on behalf of my family farm, Western Growers and every California farmer who faces the same challenges and opportunities that my family confronts. Western Growers and I wholeheartedly support the Governor's CPR effort designed to make government more efficient and less expensive.

For us as farmers, it is critical that California reduces the red tape, unnecessary and redundant regulations and government obstacles that stand in the way of producing the most nutritious and safe food found anywhere in the world.

For family farmers, California, perhaps unintentionally, continues to impose government and institutional barriers that makes my job of producing food for California families very difficult. We must compete in a global marketplace; it is a global marketplace that demands less regulation, less cost and less stringent environmental, conservation, wage, and benefit requirements than those we deal with daily in California.

If California continues down this road, there may come a time when remaining California farmers cannot feed its citizens and we will be required to depend on food and fiber from other states and countries.

Don't misunderstand me, I am not complaining about living in California. It is a great place to live and farm. However, I believe that government must become more efficient and effective and I believe that this CPR process can make government and laws and regulations focus on keeping farmers on the farm.

Focusing specifically on CPR recommendations let me say that I consider my fellow California farmers and my family to be the original stewards of the land and the primary environmentalists. Without preserving my land, practicing environmentally sensitive farming practices, being a true steward of my farm and

adhering to sustainable farm activities, my family could not have farmed for as long as we have.

My job is to farm. California farmers simply don't have the in house expertise to deal with California's extremely complex regulations, laws and government bureaucracies.

We strongly rely on the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to serve as our expert dealing with all other state agencies that routinely regulate us, such as the Resources Agency, Cal-EPA and other departments and agencies.

The CPR staff, in its report, notes that CDFA is "the model vertically integrated, customer focused, and mission driven department the CPR hopes to replicate throughout state government".

As California farmers provide food and fiber to all Californians, we strongly recommend that CDFA serve as the single source of contact and authority for all issues relating to farming including land stewardship, conservation and environment and any other related activities.

We also strongly advocate that CDFA have a seat at every policy table in every agency and literally involved in every policy discussion that would affect California farming including land stewardship and farm, water and farmland conservation and preservation.

I have provided more specific recommendations in my testimony summary sheet and California agriculture will deliver to you a very comprehensive CPR position paper before the end of the month.

In conclusion, I join California's farmers in applauding your efforts to streamline government and make California an easier place to farm.

Thank you.